

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN-H:MCOTTER:PW

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, HO

SUBJECT: ARTHUR TONSMEIRE: BARBARETA ISLAND

1. MR. TONSMEIRE CALLED ON CEN OFFICERS FEBRUARY 28 TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN HONDURAS. HE OWNS BARBARETA ISLAND, IS CURRENTLY BUILDING A 48-ROOM HOTEL THERE, AND PLANS A SIZEABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS. HE WAS AWARE OF DECREE 103 AND HAD HEARD RUMORS ON LAND REFORM AND WISHED TO EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH THE DEPARTMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE.

2. DEPTOFFS EXPLAINED THAT DECREE 103 APPLIED ONLY TO LUMBER AND THAT GOH ACTIONS SO FAR INDICATE A DESIRE TO WORK WITH U.S. INVESTORS. DEPTOFFS SUGGESTED THAT TONSMEIRE CONTACT THE EMBASSY AS WELL AS THE GOH TO GET UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON LAND REFORM AND ON THE GENERAL CLIMATE FOR INVESTMENT.

3. TONSMEIRE APPEARED RELIEVED. HE SAID HE WAS TRAVELING TO HONDURAS NEXT WEEK AND WOULD CALL ON THE AMBASSADOR AND MISS MAYFIELD ON MARCH 5 OR 6. HE INDICATED HE WOULD ASK THE EMBASSY TO SEEK APPOINTMENTS WITH GOH OFFICIALS. DEPTOFFS SUGGESTED THAT HE TALK TO BENNATON AND ACOSTA BONILLA.

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4. COMMENT: TONSMEIRE IS PRESIDENT OF FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN OF MOBILE, ALABAMA; BARBARETA ISLAND VENTURE IS A FAMILY UNDERTAKING AND DOESN'T INCLUDE FIRST FEDERAL MONEY. KISSINGER

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